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# **Montana Office of Public Instruction**

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## **REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS**

**MARCH 2009**

**DEADLINE FOR SUBMISSION: MAY 8, 2009**

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## **EVEN START FAMILY LITERACY PROGRAM**

**NO CHILD LEFT BEHIND (NCLB) ACT OF 2001**

**TITLE I, PART B, SUBPART 3**

**(PUBLIC LAW 107-110)**

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# I. GENERAL INFORMATION

## A. INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW OF FEDERAL PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS

Even Start Family Literacy Programs provide *intensive family literacy* services that involve parents and children in an effort to help parents become full partners in the education of their children and to assist children in reaching their full potential as learners. The purpose of these partnerships is to help break the cycle of poverty and low literacy by improving the educational opportunities of low-income families through a cooperative learning effort.

Applicants must propose programs that build on existing *community resources of high quality* to create *intensive* family literacy services. Family literacy services are services provided to participants on a voluntary basis that are of sufficient intensity in terms of hours, of sufficient duration to make sustainable changes in a family, and integrate the following activities:

- interactive literacy activities between parents and their children [Parent and Child Together (PACT) Time];
- training and support for parents regarding how to be the primary teacher for their children and full partners in the education of their children (Parenting Education);
- parent literacy training that leads to economic self-sufficiency (Adult Education); and
- an age-appropriate education to prepare children for success in school and life experiences (Early Childhood Education).

An integrated project must include (1) activities for parents and children together, (2) parenting education, (3) adult education and, (4) early childhood education.

Even Start federal funds are not meant to add to existing services within a community and only used if they are high quality. Even Start funds are intended to coordinate and create a new range of services. Even Start program services are an umbrella that provides seamless services for the whole family. Services already available in the community must not be duplicated, but can be built upon to create a new range of services.

## B. ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS

Applicant's partnership must be composed of ***at least***: (1) a school district, ***and*** (2) a not-for-profit community-based organization, a public agency other than a local educational agency, an institution of higher education, or a private or public not-for-profit organization other than a local educational agency of demonstrated quality.

The applicant must clearly delineate each partner's respective roles and functions, identify which partner will serve as fiscal agent and agree in writing to any required assurances and authorizations. It is important to distinguish between the more formal arrangement between the partners that will constitute the applicant "eligibility entity" and the many collaborations with organizations needed to implement a family literacy program. A successful applicant will be expected to possess the experience and/or expertise to provide quality family literacy services, as defined by the *Guide to Quality for Even Start Family Literacy Programs*.

There are additional eligibility requirements for communities that have previously received federal Even Start funding. A significant change in partnership is needed to create a new project. A minor change in partnership composition — simply dropping a partner or adding or replacing a partner — without a significant project change would not be sufficient change to create a new project for funds. However, when there is a total change in the population served, this would constitute a need for a new program. For example, a large school district that previously had been a partner in a funded project could join with new partners to form a new partnership and apply for funds to operate a project in a different high-need school attendance area of the city.

## **C. ELIGIBLE PARTICIPANTS**

Families eligible to participate in **EVEN START** programming are those in which:

- There are adult parents (including teenage parents) who are identified most in need of services and who do not possess sufficient mastery of basic educational skills to function effectively in society; who do not have a high school diploma or its recognized equivalent level of education; or who are unable to speak, read or write the English language.
- There are children from birth through seven years of age.
- Other need-related factors including chronic unemployment, homelessness, handicapping conditions (including a high percentage of children to be served that reside within a schoolwide attendance area), and a high number or percentage of parents who have been victims of domestic violence or those who are receiving assistance under Families Achieving Independence in Montana (FAIM).

To be eligible for Even Start activities and services, an adult must be the "parent or legal guardian" of an eligible child, and either be: (1) eligible for participation in adult basic education literacy activities as defined under the Adult Education Act and Family Literacy Act; or (2) attending a high school.

A teen parent is eligible to participate in Even Start if they are within the state's compulsory school attendance age range, as long as the school district provides the basic education component.

Family members of eligible participants may participate in Even Start activities and services when such participation would serve Even Start purposes.

Local Even Start projects may allow children over the age of seven years to participate in project activities and services if the local project collaborates with a program under Title I, Part A of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, and if Title I, Part A funds contribute to the cost of providing project activities and services to those children, as long as the focus of the project remains on families with young children.

## **D. FISCAL INFORMATION**

Due to the drastic cut to the federal Even Start budget, it is anticipated that sufficient funds will be available to award up to three applicants overall.

- Programs applying for a first grant cycle (years one through four) may request a minimum of \$75,000 and a maximum of \$125,000 for the 2009-2010 year.
- Programs applying for a second grant cycle (years five through eight) may request a minimum of \$75,000 and a maximum of \$110,000 for the 2009-2010 year.

- Programs applying for a third or sub-grant cycle (years nine through 12 and years 12 through 16) may request a minimum of \$75,000 and a maximum of \$100,000 for the 2009-2010 year.

Successful projects are expected to operate for four years. Grant awards will be issued for each budget year within the grant cycle. For the current year (budget year 2009), funds will be available July 1, 2009, through June 30, 2010. Continuation for the next three years will be contingent upon sufficient progress in meeting the goals of the program and progress on the "Montana Even Start Family Literacy Performance Indicators" for the program and participants. Projects will follow the schedule for minimum local share outlined herein. Application for the funding must be submitted for each subsequent fiscal year.

After successfully completing the first four-year cycle, an eligible entity may **re-compete** in the open pool for an additional four-year cycle of funding. Beyond year eight programs may continue to re-compete for four-year funding cycles. The amount of funding in any subsequent grant period is based on the availability of federal funds designated for Even Start.

The applicant's local share of an Even Start project is:

Funding Year	Federal Even Start Share	Local Share
1st year	90%	10%
2nd year	80%	20%
3rd year	70%	30%
4th year	60%	40%
5th, 6th, 7th, 8th years	50%	50%
9th, 10th, 11th, 12th years	35%	65%

### Calculating Federal and Local Share

#### Example 1:

In the first year of federal funding, a project is responsible for providing at least 10 percent of the total project cost. To determine the minimum local share from the total project cost, the total project cost is multiplied by 10 percent. For example, in the first year of a project, if the total project cost is \$100,000, that figure is multiplied by 10 percent to determine the minimum local share ( $\$100,000 \times .10 = \$10,000$ ). The federal share is then calculated by subtracting the local share from the total project cost ( $\$100,000 - \$10,000 = \$90,000$ ).

If a project knows the federal share amount rather than the total project cost, and wishes to calculate the minimum local share, it must first calculate the total project cost. For example, in the first year of a project, if the federal share amount is \$90,000, and that amount is 90 percent of the total project cost, then the project would calculate the total project cost by dividing the federal share by 90 percent ( $\$90,000 \div .90 = \$100,000$ ). The minimum local share would then be calculated by multiplying the total project cost by 10 percent ( $\$100,000 \times .10 = \$10,000$ ).

#### Example 2:

In the fifth year of federal funding, a project is responsible for providing at least 50 percent of the total cost. To determine the amount of the local share, a project must first determine the amount of the federal share to be provided. For example, if \$100,000 is the amount of federal share to be provided, and is 50 percent of the total project cost—

The total project cost in the fifth year is calculated as follows:

$\$100,000$  divided by .50 equals \$200,000                      Total cost of project equals \$200,000

The local share (50 percent of total cost) is calculated as follows:

$\$200,000 \times .50$  equals \$100,000                      Local share equals \$100,000

The local share is the amount the project is required to contribute to the total cost of the project.

The state may award one grant for less than \$75,000 each fiscal year, but the program must be of sufficient size, scope, and quality to be effective.

Even Start funds may NOT be used for indirect costs. Local share may be provided as cash or in-kind that is fairly evaluated and may be obtained from any source including federal sources other than Even Start. Local share contributions may include equipment, supplies, space, salaries, services, etc. **It is the state's full intention that Even Start funded projects be viewed as demonstration projects which eventually will be self-sustaining.**

## **E. TERMS OF THE GRANT**

1. Applicant may be asked to clarify or revise certain aspects of their proposal. Grantee will receive an award letter from the Montana Office of Public Instruction that specifies the amount of the award.
2. Applicant must provide assurances required by the Montana Office of Public Instruction.
3. Applicant must enter into a legal agreement to provide proposed services with the Montana Office of Public Instruction.
4. Applicant must comply with all reporting requirements and other policy mandates that may be issued relating to the quality administration of an Even Start project and, as necessary, for the state to perform its responsibilities.
5. The program coordinator must participate in statewide Even Start meetings (including the Montana Family Literacy Consortium) and other staff development. The program staff must participate in annual statewide Even Start meetings.

6. Applicant is required to participate in the National Center for Family Literacy (NCFL) Foundation's Family Literacy training offered in the local communities in the first six months of operation. New staff members of all programs must participate in the same state training within the first six months of employment.
7. Applicant must cooperate with all national and state project evaluation requirements and shall budget adequate funds for such purposes. The applicant's budget must also include funds to conduct an independent evaluation of the local project.
8. Applicant project must be of sufficient size, scope, and quality to give reasonable promise of meeting the purposes of Even Start. Center-based programs must provide all four components under one roof (two classrooms minimum).
9. Applicant's plan shall remain in effect for the duration of the eligible entity's participation in the program and it is required that the plan will be periodically reviewed and revised by the eligible entity, as necessary.
10. Grantee must use funds exclusively for the purposes stated in the approved proposal and must expend funds in accordance with the approved budget and the grantee's policies and procedures related to such expenditures. Grantee must only expend funds for activities occurring during the grant period. Programs must set aside 10 percent of grant funds for professional development (5 percent) and transportation (5 percent). Transportation funds are used to transport families to the program, staff members to home visits, and staff members to professional development activities.
11. Staff qualifications for existing programs. Current staff whose salaries are paid, in whole or in part, with Even Start funds, the applicant ensures that the:
  - majority of the staff providing academic instruction should have a graduate degree related to early childhood education, elementary or high school education, or adult education degree and hold the appropriate state licensure.
  - program director and program coordinator receive training in the operation of a family literacy program.
  - paraprofessionals who provide support for academic instruction have a high school diploma or its recognized equivalent.Staff qualifications for new program's staff or new staff hired to programs that provide academic instruction to programs possess:
  - an associate's, bachelor's or graduate degree in a field related to early childhood education, elementary or high school education, or adult education and obtain the appropriate state licensure.
12. Applicant will ensure that the instructional components of this program will be based on scientifically based reading research (as defined in section 2252 of P.L. 1208 of the ESEA) and the prevention of reading difficulties for children and adults to the extent such research is available.
13. Applicant will ensure that early childhood services for infants, toddlers, and/or preschoolers provided in group settings will be conducted in facilities licensed by the Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services (DPHHS).
14. All grantees are required to run an enrichment and instructional program during the summer months.
15. Grantees are required to submit the following reports to the Office of Public Instruction:
  - a. Mid-Year Progress Report
  - b. Continuation Application End-of-Year Report
  - c. Expenditure Reports
  - d. Independent Project Evaluation Report, if applicableIn addition, program data must be provided annually to the federal Even Start evaluation contractor.

## F. FUNDING PRIORITY:

Proposals will be rated and funded according to the following priority:

The program will serve families most in need of Even Start services that are located within an area of the state with the highest level of need for Even Start services. Need is indicated by high levels of poverty, low levels of adult literacy, and/or English language proficiency of the eligible adults. Other need-related factors include chronic unemployment, homelessness and handicapping conditions (including a high percentage of children to be served that reside within a schoolwide attendance area), and a high number or percentage of parents who have been victims of domestic violence or a high number or percentage of parents who are receiving assistance under FAIM.

## G. SELECTION CRITERIA AND REVIEW PROCESS

Proposals will be reviewed by a panel of readers with at least three members that includes one early childhood professional, one adult education professional, and one individual with expertise in family literacy programs.

Proposals must earn a minimum of 70 percent of the Total Proposal Points to be eligible for an award.

It is the intent of the Montana Office of Public Instruction to fund projects that will serve the greatest number of families who are most in need of Even Start services.

Additional points will be awarded to applicants including chronic unemployment, homelessness, handicapping conditions (including a high percentage of children to be served that reside within a schoolwide attendance area), and a high number or percentage of parents who have been victims of domestic violence or those who are receiving assistance under FAIM.

Applications will be scored in one phase, and possibly in two phases. During Phase One, all applications (new programs and existing programs) will be scored on a 140-point scale. If one application earns more points than all others, that program will be considered for an award. If the Phase One scoring process results in applications from at least two existing programs earning the highest scores, and those scores are equal, those applications will go through a second phase of scoring. During Phase Two, the tied applications from existing programs will have an opportunity to earn 40 more points based on progress toward the Montana Even Start Family Literacy Program Performance Indicators. The application with the highest score will be considered for an award.

Intensity and Duration of Services	5 points
Time Schedule and Service Provider	5 points
Planning Team and Their Involvement	5 points
Statement of Demonstrated Need	10 points
Collaboration and Coordination	20 points
Staff Qualifications	5 points
Staff Development	5 points
Complimentary Service Delivery Method	5 points
Scientifically Based Research	5 points
Year-Round Services	5 points
Program Flexibility	5 points
Identification, Recruitment, and Screening	5 points
Support Services	5 points
Evaluation	5 points
Budget	<u>10 points</u>
<b>Total Proposal Points</b>	100 points
Priority Points for Need (Demographic Points)	



(0 to 10 points)	___ points
Priority Points for Empowerment Zone (Poplar, Montana only)	5 points
Priority Points toward Performance Indicators (0 to 25 points)	25 points
TOTAL POINTS POSSIBLE	140 points

The state review of all applications will ensure that legal and other requirements have been met. Further, the state will consider the priority points when selecting a proposal for funding. The state reserves the right to negotiate program and budget issues identified in the review and rating process with selected projects prior to the issuance of awards.

## H. APPLICATION FORMAT

All applications must follow these instructions in order to be eligible for review. All applications must include all state-specified project information, authorizations and certifications, assurances, narrative sections, budget narratives and attachments, as well as other necessary supporting documents. The entire narrative section, beginning after the abstract, should be no more than 15 single-sided, double-spaced, and numbered pages. The page size should be 8 1/2" x 11" with a legible type no smaller than 12-pitch or 12-point type size, and one-inch top, bottom, and side margins. One original and four copies of the complete application package must be submitted. Staple or binder clip each complete set of application materials; do NOT use binders, plastic covers, folders, dividers, tabs, etc. Submission by fax or electronic mail will not be accepted. The original must *include original signatures on all documents requiring signatures*. **Applications in which the project narrative exceeds 15 single-sided, double-spaced and numbered pages, and/or without proper signatures will be judged ineligible.**

An appendix must be limited to 20 single-sided pages. All attachments in the appendix must be referenced in the narrative and adequately marked for ease of reference by the reviewers.

Required documents include Memorandum of Agreement between the two partners, copy of firm agreement from other supporting agencies, key staff resumes or job descriptions and timelines/schedule. **If the Appendix exceeds 20 pages, the application will be judged ineligible.**

### Due Date

The closing date for the receipt of the application is close of business, **May 8, 2009**. The original and four copies of your application should be submitted directly to:

Joan Morris  
Even Start Director  
Office of Public Instruction  
PO Box 202501  
Helena, MT 59620-2501

The Office of Public Instruction is committed to equal employment opportunity and non-discriminatory access to all our programs and services. For information or to file a complaint, contact Tom Antonick, OPI Title IX/EEO Coordinator at (406) 444-3161 or [tantonick@mt.gov](mailto:tantonick@mt.gov).